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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 008310

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/15/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: AK PARTY MOVES STEP BY STEP TOWARD FORMING
GOVERNMENT

REF: ANKARA 8252

(U) Classified by Polcouns John Kunstadter; reasons: 1.5
(b,d).

1. (C) We understand from top AK Party official Bulent Arinc that in his Nov. 15 call on President Sezer, AK Party chairman Erdogan submitted AK number two Abdullah Gul's name as AK's first choice for Prime Minister. Arinc intimated that Gul is AK's preferred candidate not only owing to his popularity within the party's grassroots and experience both in Parliament and foreign affairs, but also to maintain the delicate balances among Erdogan's ambitious group of senior advisors.

2. (C) However, AK has seen that Sezer prefers to choose candidates for senior positions not according to political criteria but from among a narrow circle of statist acquaintances from his university class. In this regard, Arinc noted Sezer's rectitude but said that Sezer, an arch-statist, does not understand the political scene and in fact deprecates the nature and role of politics (we have heard the same from others). Therefore, Erdogan offered the name of former senior bureaucrat Vecdi Gonul, whom Sezer had worked with previously and who is from Sezer's generation, as an alternative. Arinc opined that, if Sezer gives out the mandate to form the government by Nov. 17, AK could have a government in place by late Nov.

3. (C) Arinc admitted obliquely that he had had hopes of being tapped as Prime Minister but, laughing, said he had withdrawn his name from consideration because he knew the Deep State (ref) had even more compromising video tapes of him in a (previously) radical Islamist mode than of Erdogan. Saying he hopes to be elected Speaker of Parliament Nov. 19 or 20, Arinc was caught off guard when we noted that just before our meeting a leading TV news channel reported Sezer wants to influence Parliament's choice of speaker. Arinc remarked uneasily that Sezer has no constitutional authority over Parliament's decision.

PEARSON